



Climate change, conflict and development in Sudan: Global neo-Malthusian narratives and local power struggles

Author(s): Verhoeven H
Year: 2011
Journal: Development and Change. 42 (3): 679-707

Abstract:

Dystopian accounts of climate change posit that it will lead to more conflict, causing state failure and mass population movements. Yet these narratives are both theoretically and empirically problematic: the conflict-environment hypothesis merges a global securitization agenda with local manipulations of Northern fears about the state of planetary ecology. Sudan has experienced how damaging this fusion of wishful thinking, power politics and top-down development can be. In the 1970s, global resource scarcity concerns were used locally to impose the fata morgana of Sudan as an Arab-African breadbasket: in the name of development, violent evictions of local communities contributed to Sudan's second civil war and associated famines. Today, Darfur has been labelled 'the world's first climate change conflict', masking the long-term political-economic dynamics and Sudanese agency underpinning the crisis. Simultaneously, the global food crisis is instrumentalized to launch a dam programme and agricultural revival that claim to be African answers to resource scarcity. The winners, however, are Sudan's globalized Islamist elites and foreign investors, whilst the livelihoods of local communities are undermined. Important links exist between climatic developments and security, but global Malthusian narratives about state failure and conflict are dangerously susceptible to manipulations by national elites; the practical outcomes decrease rather than increase human security. In the climate change era, the breakdown of institutions and associated violence is often not an unfortunate failure of the old system due to environmental shock, but a strategy of elites in wider processes of power and wealth accumulation and contestation.

Source: Ask your librarian to help locate this item.

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change;
surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker

Exposure :

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Food/Water Security, Human Conflict/Displacement

Food/Water Security: Agricultural Productivity, Food Access/Distribution

Geographic Feature: ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Africa

African Region/Country: African Country

Other African Country: Sudan

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Family Planning/Population Reduction): ☒

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to promote family planning or reduce population growth as a climate change adaptation or mitigation measure

A focus of content

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Injury, Malnutrition/Undernutrition

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern: ☒

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status

Resource Type: ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Review

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content